WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of protecting a conductor in a micromachined device, said method comprising:

providing a substrate for a micromachined device;

providing a conductor as part of said micromachined device for use in conducting electrical signals during operation of said micromachined device;

providing a protective covering for said conductor so that said conductor is disposed between said substrate and said protective covering.

2. The method as described in claim 1 wherein said protective covering comprises polysilicon.

3. The method as described in claim 1 wherein said providing a protective covering comprises depositing said protective covering as a layer of material.

4. The method as described in claim 3 wherein said layer of material protects a plurality of conductors.

5. The method as described in claim 1 and further comprising:

electrically coupling said protective covering with said substrate so as to configure a ground ring around said conductor.

6. The method as described in claim 1 and further comprising:

configuring said protective covering so as to form a tunnel relative to said conductor.

7. The method as described in claim 1 and further comprising:

not depositing a passivation layer over an active mechanical component of said micromachined device.

8. A micromachined device comprising:

a substrate;

a conductor configured as part of said micromachined device;

a protective covering disposed over said conductor so that said conductor is disposed between said substrate and said protective covering.

9. The device as described in claim 8 wherein said protective covering comprises polysilicon.

10. The device as described in claim 8 wherein said protective covering is deposited as a layer of material.

11. The device as described in claim 10 wherein said layer of material protects a plurality of conductors.

12. The device as described in claim 8 wherein said protective covering is electrically coupled with said substrate so as to form a ground ring around said conductor.

13. The device as described in claim 8 wherein said protective covering is configured so as to form a tunnel relative to said conductor.

14. The device as described in claim 8 wherein said device is configured for operation without a passivation layer disposed over said condutor.

15. A method of protecting a conductor in a micromachined device, said method comprising:

providing a micromachined device comprising a substrate;

providing a conductor as part of said micromachined device;

providing as part of said micromachined device a protective covering, wherein said conductor is disposed between said protective covering and said substrate of said micromachined device.

16. The method as described in claim 15 wherein said providing a protective covering comprises utilizing polysilicon as said protective covering.

17. The method as described in claim 15 wherein said providing said protective covering comprises depositing said protective covering as a layer of material.

18. The method as described in claim 17 wherein said layer of material protects a plurality of conductors.

19. The method as described in claim 15 and further comprising:

electrically coupling said protective covering with said substrate so as to configure a ground ring around said conductor.

20. The method as described in claim 15 and further comprising:

configuring said protective covering so as to form a tunnel relative to said conductor.

21. The method as described in claim 15 and further comprising:

not depositing a passivation layer over an active mechanical component of said micromachined device.

22. A micromachined apparatus comprising:

a substrate;

a bonding pad;

a conductor disposed over said substrate, wherein said conductor is electrically coupled with said bonding pad;

an active mechanical component disposed over said substrate, wherein said active mechanical component is configured to move relative to said substrate;

a protective cover disposed over said conductor so that said conductor is disposed between said protective cover and said substrate.

23. The apparatus as described in claim 22 wherein said active mechanical component comprises a mirror.

24. The apparatus as described in claim 23 wherein said mirror comprises silicon.

25. The apparatus as described in claim 22 wherein said active mechanical component is exposed to the atomosphere during operation of said apparatus.

26. The apparatus as described in claim 22 wherein a portion of said conductor is exposed to the atmosphere during operation of said apparatus.

27. The apparatus as described in claim 22 wherein said protective cover comprises an polysilicon.

28. The apparatus as described in claim 22 wherein said protective layer of material is operable to protect said conductor from an electrical short when a voltage of at least 100 Volts is applied to said protective layer of material.

29. The apparatus as described in claim 22 wherein said protective layer of material is configured so as to form a ground ring with said substrate around said conductor.

30. The apparatus as described in claim 22 wherein said protective layer of material is configured so as to form a tunnel relative to said conductor.

31. The apparatus as described in claim 22 wherein said apparatus is configured for operation without depositing a passivation layer.

32. A method of providing a micromachined apparatus, said method comprising:

providing a substrate;

disposing a bonding pad over said substrate;

disposing a conductor over said substrate, wherein said conductor is electrically coupled with said bonding pad;

disposing an active mechanical component over said substrate, wherein said active mechanical component is configured to move relative to said substrate during operation of said micromachined apparatus;

disposing a protective cover over said conductor so that said conductor is disposed between said protective covering and said substrate.

33. The method as described in claim 32 wherein said active mechanical component comprises a mirror.

34. The method as described in claim 33 wherein said mirror comprises silicon.

35. The method as described in claim 32 wherein said active mechanical component is exposed to the atomosphere during operation of said micromachined apparatus.

36. The method as described in claim 32 wherein a portion of said conductor is exposed to the atmosphere during operation of said micromachined apparatus.

37. The method as described in claim 32 wherein said protective cover comprises polysilicon.

38. The method as described in claim 32 wherein said protective cover is operable so as to protect said conductor from an electrical short when a voltage of at least 100 Volts is applied to said protective cover.

39. The method as described in claim 32 and further comprising:

electrically coupling said protective cover with said substrate so as to configure a ground ring around said conductor.

40. The method as described in claim 32 and further comprising:

configuring said protective cover so as to form a tunnel relative to said conductor.

41. The method as described in claim 32 and further comprising:

not depositing a passivation layer over an active mechanical component of said micromachined apparatus.

42. A method of configuring a micromachined apparatus, said method comprising:

providing a bonding pad as part of said micromachined apparatus;

providing an active mechanical component, wherein said active mechanical component is configured to move during operation of said micromachined apparatus;

disposing a conductor between said active mechanical component and said bonding pad;

protecting at least a portion of said conductor disposed between said active mechanical component and said bonding pad with a protective layer of material operable to protect said conductor from electrical shorts.

43. The method as described in claim 42 wherein said providing an active mechanical component comprises providing a mirror.

44. The method as described in claim 42 and further comprising configuring said active mechanical component so as to be exposed to the atmosphere during operation of said micromachined apparatus.

45. The method as described in claim 42 wherein said protective layer of material protects said conductor when a voltage of at least 100 Volts is applied to said protective layer of material.

46. The method as described in claim 42 and further comprising:

configuring said protective layer of material so as to form at least part of a ground ring around said conductor.

47. The method as described in claim 42 and further comprising:

configuring said protective layer of material so as to form a tunnel relative to said conductor.

48. The method as described in claim 42 and further comprising:

not depositing a passivation layer over said active mechanical component.

49. A micromachined apparatus comprising:

a bonding pad;

an active mechanical component configured to move during operation of said micromachined apparatus;

a conductor disposed between said active mechanical component and said bonding pad;

a covering configured so as to protect at least a portion of said conductor disposed between said bonding pad and said active mechanical component from electrical shorts.

50. The micromachined apparatus as described in claim 49 wherein said active mechanical component comprises a mirror.

51. The micromachined apparatus as described in claim 49 wherein a portion of said conductor is exposed to the atmosphere during operation of said micromachined apparatus.

52. The micromachined apparatus as described in claim 49 wherein said covering is configured so as to protect said conductor when a voltage of at least 100 Volts is applied to said covering.

53. The micromachined apparatus as described in claim 49 wherein said covering is configured so as to form at least part of a ground ring around said conductor.

54. The micromachined apparatus as described in claim 49 wherein said covering is configured so as to form a tunnel relative to said conductor.

55. The micromachined apparatus as described in claim 49 wherein said micromachined apparatus is configured without depositing a passivation layer.

56. A method comprising:

providing a substrate;

disposing a conductor over said substrate operable for conducting electrical signals;

configuring an equipotential barrier at least partially around said conductor operable for protecting said conductor from electrical shorts.

57. The method as described in claim 56 wherein said configuring an equipotential barrier comprises:

depositing polysilicon over said conductor; and

electrically coupling said polysilicon with said substrate so as to form an equipotential ring.

58. The method as described in claim 57 and further comprising:

electrically coupling said equipotential ring to a circuit ground.

59. The method as described in claim 56 wherein said configuring an equipotential barrier comprises:

configuring a tunnel of electrically conductive material over said conductor; and

coupling said electrically conductive material with said substrate.

60. The method as described in claim 59 and further comprising:

electrically coupling said equipotential barrier to a circuit ground.

61. An apparatus comprising:

a substrate;

a conductor disposed over said substrate, said conductor operable for conducting electrical signals;

an equipotential barrier disposed at least partially around said conductor and operable for protecting said conductor from electrical shorts.

62. The apparatus as described in claim 61 wherein said equipotential barrier comprises polysilicon; and

wherein said polysilicon is electrically coupled with said substrate so as to form an equipotential ring.

63. The apparatus as described in claim 62 wherein said equipotential ring is configured for coupling to a circuit ground during operation of said apparatus.

64. The apparatus as described in claim 61 wherein said equipotential barrier comprises a conductive material configured as a tunnel over said conductor; and

wherein said conductive material is electrically coupled with said substrate.

65. The apparatus as described in claim 64 wherein said equipotential barrier is configured for coupling to a circuit ground during operation of said apparatus.